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MODIFIED

PLANS AND ESTIMATES

OF THE

BOSTON HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE,

AT

WINTHROP.

1868.



BOSTON:

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1868.









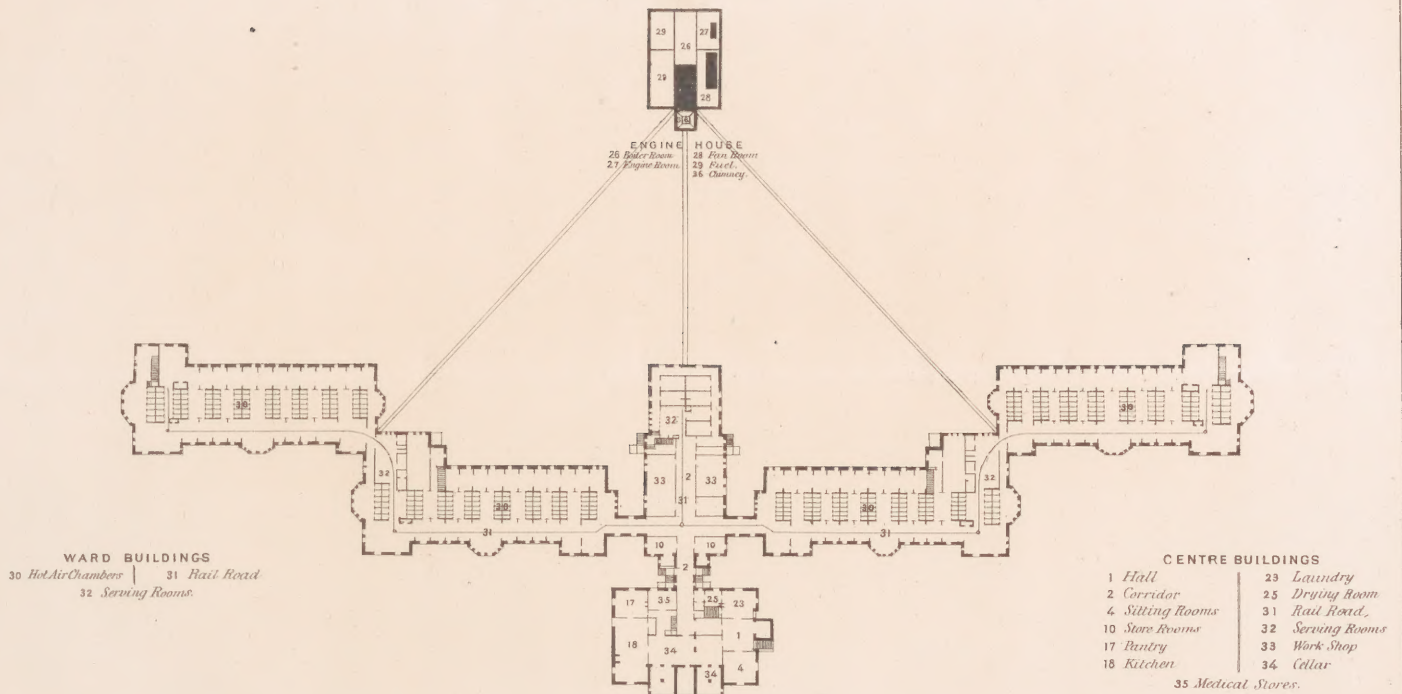
NATH: J. BRADLEE ARCHT

BOSTON HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE

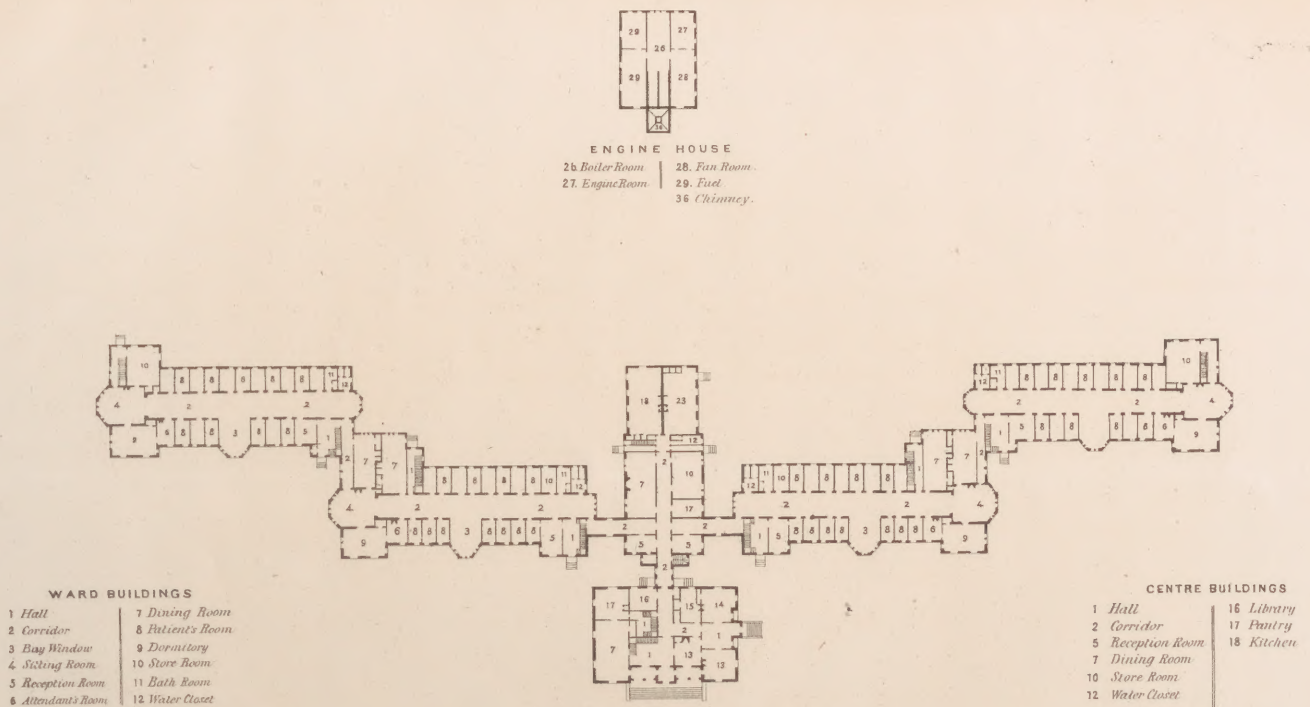
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# BASEMENT



# FIRST STORY



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*City Document.*—No. 75.

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CITY OF BOSTON.

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## CITY OF BOSTON.

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS,  
CITY HALL, BOSTON, June 12, 1868.

*To the Honorable the Mayor, and City Council of Boston :*

The Directors for Public Institutions feel again called upon to make another and most earnest appeal in behalf of the insane of this city, whose condition, both in and out of the hospital, demands in their opinion serious and prompt attention. A sense of duty to these helpless sufferers, and to the good name of Boston, — foremost in every charitable work, — induces them to present this matter at the present time. They respectfully ask that you will consider the following statement :

### HISTORY.

The present hospital was opened in 1839, as an asylum for the "lunatics" who filled the cages and cells of our Houses of Industry and Correction. It was then thought that the provision was ample for the next fifty years. In 1846 (twenty-two years ago), a considerable addition was made, mostly after the English fashion of associated dormitories. According to the standard of that day, it then furnished accommodations for two hundred patients, and thence forward it took rank in a much larger degree, as a curative institution. Previous to 1858, the "Cottage" with its eighteen strong stone and iron cells, holding twenty-two violent, filthy and often naked patients, once

deemed a desirable and commendable feature, and certainly the best of the kind in the country, was abandoned as unworthy of the age. The progress of improvement in the treatment and management of the insane rendered imperative similar changes in the main hospital building, until, at length, one hundred and eighty patients more uncomfortably crowded the THREE WARDS for each sex than did two hundred and thirty, under the old order of things.

In 1858, the Commonwealth removed their insane poor, whom, until then, the city had been obliged to receive and provide for, to the State Hospitals; and, on petition of the City Council, the Directors were authorized by law to receive paying patients. Since that time, it has done the work of a first-class hospital for the insane, — very imperfectly we know, — and all the time under the disadvantage of a lack of proper means for classification, and other important appliances, at this day regarded as indispensable. Yet, it has done this work to the measurable satisfaction and accommodation of hundreds of our citizens, who have here found, at their doors, the relief that they otherwise must have sought away from home, at great expense and untold trouble. Whether it shall so continue in the future, an ever present and accessible source of benefit to all classes of our citizens, a blessing to helpless humanity, and an honor to our municipality, or degenerate into a mere receptacle of the most demented and dehumanized of the pauper insane, — for no others will willingly enter it, — a place never to be visited by, nor so much as named to visiting strangers, will depend altogether on your answer to this appeal.

In 1862, the Directors who then had charge of the hospital, in view of the manifest necessities of the case, set themselves seriously to work to remedy the defects, and to supply the deficiencies of the structure. After several months of earnest effort, they were forced to the conclusion that nothing could be done with the present structure which would not involve a large



expenditure of money, without a corresponding result. This examination fully demonstrated the facts that in the present building there can be no decent classification; no attempt at ventilation; no direct warming of any of the sleeping rooms for the sick, feeble and excited inmates; no proper provision of dining rooms; no chapel of suitable capacity; no reception rooms, work rooms, nor other apartments now regarded as indispensable in such a hospital; that the whole house is low studded, contracted, inconvenient of ingress and egress, especially in cases of fire; that its entire grounds contain but four acres of land for all purposes, and that in every way it is unsuitable for the proper remedial treatment of the insane, and unworthy of Boston. In this conclusion, the City Government of the year 1865, after a patient and careful personal examination of the premises, fully concurred, and ordered the Board of Directors to select and recommend a new and suitable locality.

### LOCATION.

In obedience to this order, the Board spent the entire summer in the examination of the several sites in the vicinity of Boston. They finally, by unanimous choice, selected the Winthrop farm as the one which, *all things considered*, seemed to them the most suitable for such a purpose. In this conclusion they were fully sustained by the judgment of several of the best experts in the country, whose position and large experience give to their opinions the weight of authority. (*See Appendix A.*)

Upon the report of the Directors to the City Council, the members thereof personally examined the location, approved the choice, and ordered its purchase by a *unanimous vote*.

It is objected to this location, that the farm is in danger of *being washed away*! that vegetation will be difficult and unremunerative, while trees and shrubbery cannot be made to grow; that by its exposed situation it is bleak and unfit for human hab-

itation; that it is inconvenient of access for both patients and their friends, and that taxation will be a serious and constant burden on the city treasury.

To the first objection, if offered in *seriousness*, it is a sufficient answer that, when Nahant has disappeared, fears for the loss of Winthrop Farm (*not Winthrop Head Bluff*) may be entertained.

That vegetation is easy, is proved by the fact, that up to the present time, good crops of grass, vegetables and grain have been produced there.

Contiguous portions of the original farm are now occupied and improved by the inhabitants of Winthrop, and are highly valued by the residents. Trees and shrubbery are growing there, and thriving well, as they are also in similarly exposed localities all along the shore to Gloucester. It is bleak in winter, as it is bleak everywhere on the shore of our harbor; as it is at South Boston, and on all the highlands in the vicinity: but during eight months of the year, it offers unsurpassed attractions, by its pure and bracing air, its beautiful landscape, and ever changing marine views, invigorating the feeble, soothing the excitable, cheering the despondent, and benefiting all.

### ACCESS.

Conveyance by steam and carriage is as complete and frequent as to any of the neighboring towns. Three-quarters of an hour only will be required to reach the hospital by steam and carriage from the city proper; while the contemplated horse railroad to Point Shirley will convey visitors as near the gate and in as short a time, as is now done at South Boston. It will be as accessible as almost any of our hospitals for the insane, the trustees and superintendents of which are of opinion that access with them is full easy enough.

## TAXATION.

All incorporated charitable institutions in the State are exempt from taxation by law ; and the McLean Asylum, at Somerville, no more a charitable institution than this, pays no taxes whatever. But even if not thus exempt at Winthrop, we shall be liable only to a proportion of the *town* taxes, Boston now paying all the *county* expenses. At Dorchester, we should be taxed for the expenses of that large township, and also for those of Norfolk County, considerably increased by the loss of the rich city of Roxbury. If located in Roxbury, on a suitable site of ample size, a large amount of land at a primary cost, vastly greater than that paid for the Winthrop Farm, must be withdrawn from private use, which if built upon and improved, would, in a few years, pay into the treasury tenfold more than would be withdrawn by taxation at Winthrop. The Directors furthermore cannot shut their eyes to the fact, that the location of such a hospital in the midst of a rapidly increasing population would in a short time prove injurious to the best interests of the patients, and very objectionable to those desiring to reside in that vicinity.

## PLANS.

During the year 1865, the City Council appropriated twenty thousand dollars for the preparation of the plans of a new hospital structure, and for improvements on the farm. In the spring of 1867, in view of all these facts, the City Council, by a *two-thirds* vote, appropriated *one hundred thousand* dollars (which was raised by taxation, and is *now* in the city treasury, devoted to this project) to commence the building, subject to the approval of the plans. During the past summer, the plans which had been patiently and diligently prepared some time before were care-



fully revised by the architect, N. J. Bradlee, Esq., under the constant personal supervision of the Directors, after a thorough examination of the best hospitals in the country. Upon completion, they met the approval of all the superintendents of similar institutions to whom they were presented. They say of them, that for *economy of construction, economy of management* after construction, and for *convenience in every respect* they have no superior. (See *Appendix B.*)

The original plans and estimates are again presented for your information. (See City Document No. 94, series of 1867.)

The plans thus matured and endorsed were finally submitted to the City Government, and received the approval of a large majority of both branches, but were lost for the lack of a few votes in the Common Council to pass it over the Mayor's veto.

Disheartening as must be such an untoward result, at such a point in the progress of the enterprise, the Directors yet find no course left for them to pursue, but on the one hand to neglect their duty to this class of our citizens, (in whose behalf the sympathies of all good men and true should be actively engaged,) to turn their backs on them, and abandon them in their extremity; or on the other hand ask, in their name, for a reconsideration of the matter by the *present* City Government. With such an alternative, they cannot hesitate; and, therefore, are fully persuaded that the plans presented last year are as good as can be devised; that time will only demonstrate their complete adaptedness to the present and future needs of our city, and amply vindicate the wise forethought and saving carefulness that has marked every stage of their action. The Board of Directors submit the following communication from N. J. Bradlee, Esq., Architect, exhibiting modified plans and estimates:

18 PEMBERTON SQUARE, BOSTON, May , 1868.

*To the Board of Directors for Public Institutions of the City of Boston :*

GENTLEMEN, — For the purpose of reducing the accommodation and the expense in the erection of the proposed “Boston Hospital for the Insane,” at Winthrop, I have (agreeably to the request of your committee) made the following changes in the plan submitted by me on September 20, 1867 :

The rear centre building is reduced in length forty feet, and the laundry, drying room, bakery and oven are carried into the basement story. This can be done without injury to the design or convenience of the building, as the land falls off enough at this place to leave the basement entirely above ground. I should therefore recommend this change, whichever plan was adopted. The other alteration is, the omission of the third sections, which were designed for the excited patients, and the fitting up of the first floor of the second sections for this purpose. This change I feel it my duty to say will, in my opinion, greatly injure the general character and arrangement of the building for the purposes for which it was designed.

My estimate on the plans herewith submitted amounts to four hundred and twelve thousand nine hundred and eighty-three dollars, being a reduction of eighty-five thousand five hundred and twenty dollars from the estimate on the first plan adopted by your Board. The division of the estimate is as follows, viz :

Main Centre Building, the same as before,	\$59,781 00
Rear Centre Building,	40,360 00
First sections of male and female departments, same as before,	141,016 00
Second sections of male and female departments, same as before,	146,826 00
Engine, boiler, gas house, and miscellaneous,	25,000 00
Total,	<u>\$412,983 00</u>

The details of the above are the same as given in my estimate of September 20, 1867. (See City Document No. 94, for 1867.)

Very respectfully,

NATHANIEL J. BRADLEE, *Architect.*

The following shows the difference between the former estimates of expense and those now presented:

Former estimate,	\$498,503 00
<i>Present estimate,</i>	412,983 00
	<hr/>
Difference,	\$85,520 00
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<i>Present estimate,</i>	\$412,983 00
Deduct value of present site,	100,000 00
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	\$312,983 00
Appropriation of last year, still in the treasury,	100,000 00
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For future appropriation,	\$212,983 00
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*The appropriation of \$100,000, now in the Treasury, is all that will be required for the financial year of 1868-9.*

The Board of Directors submit this whole matter with great confidence to your judgment, being fully satisfied that when the subject is fully investigated and understood, this most important charity will assume its proper position in the erection of a hospital worthy of the city, the intelligence of our community, and in accordance with the spirit of the age.

Respectfully submitted.

J. P. BRADLEE, *President.*



APPENDIX A.

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The following opinions of several experienced medical gentlemen refer to the location for the Boston Hospital for the Insane at Winthrop.

Dr. Ray, late of the Butler Hospital, Providence, R. I., says :

“When I went over the ground with you in October 1866, I was very favorably impressed with its fitness for the contemplated purpose ; for it seemed to possess, in a high degree, the desirable requisites, and especially those which may be considered indispensable, viz : plenty of land, pure air, an unstinted supply of water, and an agreeable prospect.

“To those unacquainted with the peculiar needs of an Hospital for the Insane, one hundred and eighty acres may seem to be an extraordinary allowance ; but if there is anything respecting the treatment of the insane that may be regarded as settled, it is that they need more than all things else, besides food and shelter, abundant exercise out of doors, including labor on the grounds, in the shape of gardening and farming. There must be ample room to enable the patients to take long walks and drives without going outside the hospital grounds, where they may be exposed to observation, and where the roads may be in bad condition.

“The farm should be large enough to employ all the available labor on the place. There is no kind of employment in which so many persons not actually bred to it can be so profitably and pleasantly engaged as that of farming or gardening. Any hos-

pital designed for the working classes, with an extent of ground insufficient for this purpose, is certainly behind the age.

“In an economical, as well as hygienic point of view, a farm is a most valuable adjunct to an hospital for the insane. Under no other circumstances can a farm be managed so profitably. It serves not only to employ the gratuitous labor of the patients, but also the paid labor of the hired men, the teams, horses and cattle, which may be turned to account, when not required for the work on the farm, in making improvements on the grounds, in getting supplies from town, and in doing other necessary work, thus effecting a great saving of expense. Even were the farm a source of loss rather than of profit, you would still have the incalculable satisfaction of getting your milk directly from the fountain, and your vegetables directly from the ground.

“Unquestionably, the farm would relieve your finances in no insignificant degree. At the Butler Hospital with about sixty acres under cultivation, and that of the lightest kind, with no other manure than that furnished by the stock pig-styes and sewage, our balance sheet one year with another, for the last eight or ten years, showed an annual profit of about \$3,000. Even at the McLean Asylum, where every stroke of labor is paid for, the farm profits last year were between \$7,000 and \$8,000. Your soil may not be as good as theirs, but with your opportunities of obtaining sea-weed, it would soon and cheaply be brought into a very fertile condition. With this advantage, and that of considerable labor from your patients, your returns would greatly outstrip those of the Butler or McLean. To do this, you will need every acre you have secured. If there is any fault in the matter, it is that you have too little, rather than too much land. In another indispensable requisite, the site is all that can be wished; the air is pure and free. That which comes from the sea never can be otherwise; and that which comes over the land is as free from impurities as can well be expected without going far into the country. I have seen it

objected to the site that it is bleak and exposed to the full sweep of the winds. Any place on the sea-shore might be called bleak; but as many of your people seek such places for a summer residence, and many do not abandon them through the winter even, this bleakness would seem not to render the site at Winthrop completely unfit for the purpose. Of course trees must be planted, and though a few years must elapse before they can serve the purpose of protection, yet planted trees have this great advantage over native growth, that they are just where you want them; and having plenty of air, light and soil, they become well developed and handsome trees, which forest-grown trees in New England, never are. In some of the discussions respecting the site, it was assumed that trees could not be made to grow there. In this unqualified manner I should doubt the correctness of the statement. Of course there is some difficulty in raising trees on the coast; but it is certain that the coast was once well wooded, and the success which has been obtained all along the shores of the Bay, in planting, proves that the difficulty may be overcome by perseverance and skill. If it be true that no tree can be made to grow on that site, then I have no hesitation in saying, that it lacks a requisite which if not indispensable, is one of the most desirable that an hospital for the insane can possess.

“Besides all these advantages, the prospect presents a pleasing view, varied by storm and sunshine, and enlivened by a constant change of objects calculated to arrest the attention and furnish materials for reflection and conversation. It is also as free from the noise and troubles of railroads and the intrusion of loafers as any place could well be within a few miles of a large city.

“It has been mentioned as an objection to your site that its long stretch of water presents unusual facilities for suicide. This objection is certainly not without some weight, but lies against almost every hospital in the land; for scarcely one is

without a brook or pond within an easy run from the house, and two or three feet of water is as effectual for suicidal purposes as the depths of the ocean. This danger, like every other incident to a congregation of insane persons, must be met by the usual means, — by increased vigilance and every practicable safeguard.

“Considering all the circumstances of the case, therefore, I think your Board have been exceedingly fortunate in being able to secure a site within a reasonable distance of Boston, combining so completely the requisites necessary for the purpose.”

Dr. Choate, of the Taunton State Hospital, says:

“After a careful examination of the Winthrop Farm, I can express an unqualified approval of it as a site for a new hospital. Its admirable combination of salubrity, natural beauty of ground and scenery, and retirement, make it one of the most desirable locations for the purpose I have ever seen.”

Dr. Tyler, of the McLean Asylum, Somerville, says:

“I remember very well visiting with the late Dr. Stedman and yourself a number of farms which had been proposed for the location of the new Hospital for the Insane for the City of Boston, and among others the farm at Winthrop.

“I came fully to the belief, which I see no reason for changing, that the last named farm presents in a remarkable degree the requisites for such a purpose. The view is of rare beauty, the location healthy, access sufficiently easy, and there is no prospective probability of being crowded or annoyed by encroachments of population.

“The only objection made to the location, which seems to have plausibility even, is its apparent bleakness and exposure to the full force of easterly storms. It is desirable that such an institution should be placed upon high land. The other locations proposed, and which we visited, were upon hills; and the difference



in the matter of inclemency between them or between any considerable height within six miles of Boston and this place at Winthrop would not be worth counting, while in all other respects it appeared to me to be clearly preferable.

"I think *Dr. Stedman* was earnestly in accord with the above views."

## APPENDIX B.

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The following extracts contain the opinions of several medical gentlemen upon the plans for a new Hospital: They are recognized as authorities in matters pertaining to the insane in this country and Europe.

Dr. Butler, of the Hartford Retreat, says:

"I most heartily approve of the admirable plan for the 'Boston Hospital for the Insane,' at Winthrop, which you have submitted to the government of your noble old city."

Dr. Tyler, of the McLean Asylum, in Somerville, says:

"It seems to me that you have combined in them all the conveniences and facilities for the care and treatment of the insane, which the experience of those conversant therewith has proved to be of practical value."

Dr. Bancroft, of the Concord Asylum, says:

"I have examined with some care and very great interest your plan for the new Boston Hospital for the Insane, and it seems to me admirable in all respects. I cannot see how it could well be improved. I am particularly pleased with the size and arrangement of the different rooms in the wings, especially as regards light and circulation of air. I am glad also to see in one division an open corridor. The facilities for getting easily from the wards to the grounds is a very desirable feature in my estimation. The same may be said of the reception rooms in the wings.

"Taken as a whole, I am sure such a building will increase very essentially the facilities for the proper care and treatment of the insane, and carry to the maximum the architectural arrangements for the comfort and happiness of those who need to live in an asylum."

Dr. Kirkbride, of the Pennsylvania Hospital, says :

"I feel confident it will receive high commendations from those whose experience will give value to their opinions. . . . As a whole, it seems to me that all must agree that carried out as proposed, it will be a hospital remarkably complete in its arrangements, and one which will do honor to the City of Boston, and to all who may be instrumental in bringing about such a noble provision for the afflicted of your community."

Dr. Nichols, of the Government Hospital, at Washington, says :

"I hope I shall be pardoned for saying that *our* hospital edifice unites in a higher degree than any other building or place I have seen, the most important and somewhat conflicting requisites of a municipal hospital for the insane, . . . and in looking over your plan I was struck with the fact, as I think that it closely approximates the plan of this institution in affording the requisites I have enumerated. . . . It appears to me a municipal hospital for the insane which receives into its wards persons afflicted with every form of mental disease, and presenting every degree of mental and moral culture, and more or less independent pay patients, should have more means of classification than most of our public hospitals and asylums enjoy; and in your case, I think you will, in time, feel the need of *more wards for each sex* than you have in your plan."

Dr. Brown, of the Bloomingdale Asylum, New York, says :

"I have examined your plans, and congratulate you on the excellence of your designs, which contain novelties of great

merit. The building will be remarkably light and cheerful. . . . Your plans show originality, common sense and expertism, all of which are good things to have in a hospital."

Dr. Choate, of the State Lunatic Hospital at Taunton, says:

"I have examined it with great care, and with a desire to find something to criticise. . . . Two questions naturally arise in the consideration of such a plan. — First, Does it come fully up to the best standard of the present time? To this, I should unhesitatingly answer that it does. The second question is, Are there any superfluities? Can anything be lopped off, which will reduce its expense without impairing its usefulness? I have studied this point with the utmost care, for I know how important you consider it, and I can truly say that I can point out no retrenchment which would be wise economy, no curtailment which would not be serious loss.

"If you carry out your present plan fully and well, I feel fully warranted in saying, with the remembrance before me of all the excellent institutions which I have visited the past year, that you will have a *model hospital* and at a *moderate cost*."

Dr. Ray, until recently of the Butler Hospital, Providence, R. I., says:

"In reply to your favor soliciting an expression of opinion respecting the merits of your plan for a new hospital, I am glad to say it meets my hearty approval. . . . The estimated cost seems large, but I do not see how any of the features of the plan could be dropped or much modified without the sacrifice of some essential point. By reducing the size of the patients' rooms, and making the establishment, generally, as hospitals were made twenty-five or thirty years ago, you might bring down the cost, perhaps, twenty-five or thirty per cent, though I suspect it would prove much less. If it is desired that the plan should represent the improvements of an advanced philanthropy and



science, rather than the deficiencies of a past age, it must necessarily be, that a hospital should cost more in proportion to prevailing prices than it did thirty years ago.

"I do not mean to convey the idea that your plan combines *every* feature that can possibly be desired. Irrespective of original outlay and subsequent maintenance, a two-story building is preferable to one of three stories, and rooms on one side of the hall a preferable arrangement to that of rooms on both sides; but these features have seldom been adopted in this country, and may be dispensed with without detriment to any essential purpose.

"I have again carefully examined the plan to see if any essential point has been lost by any defective management of the details, and the impression made on my mind is one of almost unqualified approval. If your plan is carried into execution, I think you will have a hospital inferior to no other in the country, and one which you may justly point to as worthy of imitation, both in its general and particular arrangements."





